



*Homily – Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
King of the Universeⁱ*

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My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today, as you probably know, is the last Sunday of the Church's liturgical year. Next Sunday we start the Advent Sunday with the first Sunday in Advent.

And today we celebrate the beautiful Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

In the Gospel we have just heard, our Church presents us with a beautiful vision of the coming of Jesus Christ, seated in glory on his throne with all the angels around him and all the nations of the earth gathered before him.

And we hear our Lord's promise: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!"

My brothers and sisters, this is the great promise of our faith, This is our hope. This is what we are living for. Each of us wants to hear these words personally from Jesus Christ: "Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" Each of us wants to enter into the blessings of his Kingdom that he has prepared for us!

This is what it means to believe that Jesus Christ is our King.

Jesus Christ is the Lord of the world and the Lord of history! Because he is the Creator. Through him all things were made! He reflects the glory of God and upholds the universe by his Word of power.ⁱⁱ

But Jesus Christ is not a king like any king we have ever seen on earth. He is the Good Shepherd that we hear about in the first reading today from the prophet Ezekiel.

Christ our King has a deep love for his people. We heard his words: "I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy and dark. ... The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal." Jesus is our Good Shepherd.

In our second reading for today's Mass, St. Paul tells us that Jesus *must reign!*

Jesus Christ must rule in our hearts and in our souls. But again, he doesn't not rule like any ordinary human king. He does not rule by force or with an army. He is the Good Shepherd, as we pray in the today's Responsorial Psalm.

Jesus is a King who loves our freedom. He rules by his love, by his tender mercy. He wants us to respond with our freedom to his gifts of grace and his invitation to share in his divine life.

And it really up so us, once again, to say "Yes," to Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd, the King of the Universe.

So today we need to ask for the grace to offer our hearts to Jesus Christ. And my brothers and sisters, that means, as we know, we must place Jesus at the center of everything in our lives.

That means that we need to have a strong desire to strive for holiness and a strong intention to do *God's will* in all things. In everything that we are, and in everything that we do. Not only God's will for our individual lives. But we are also to dedicate ourselves to carrying out his intentions for our world.

We are bringing to the world, the beauty of God's Kingdom.

And we do this by making Jesus the King of our hearts, and the King of our families, and our friendships, and all our relationships. We do this through the way we live, by sharing our faith and the teachings of the Gospel and the teachings of our Church with the men and women of our time.

So let us never forget that Jesus Christ is a King who came among us as a servant. He came to serve, not be served. He came to give his life as a ransom for each one of us.ⁱⁱⁱ He is a King who died so that we might live!

This is exactly what our Lord is showing us in today's Gospel today.

Because in our love for our neighbor we find Jesus Christ. In our service to our brothers and sisters we find Jesus Christ. We know the love of God through our love of our neighbor.

Isn't it beautiful that Jesus is not asking us to do anything absolutely extraordinary? Notice that Jesus does not call us to be martyrs or to do super-human activities.

He is asking us to make simple acts of charity and deeds of mercy. To give clothes to someone who does not have any. To give a drink of water to someone who is thirsty. True love, Jesus tells us, feeds the poor and welcomes the immigrant and the homeless.

My brothers and sisters, we are not called to be heroes. We are called to be faithful. In little ways. In doing little acts of love.

In following the example of our Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, who came to serve and not to be served.

It is, no doubt, a beautiful challenge for our lives. And it's got to be lived in our daily lives — in the personal circumstances of our daily lives, making sure that we try to imitate the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Love grows through love. Through each little act of love that we make we increase our total of love of God for our world. His Kingdom of Love grows through our loving words and loving actions.

What a beautiful challenge — especially because it is something that we can really *do*. in these simple little acts of mercy that we can perform naturally, lovingly, joyfully, freely every single day of our lives.

And in that way, we allow Jesus to be the King of our hearts. And in that way we show the world that the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is a Kingdom of love, justice and peace.

So especially today, let us ask for the grace to do this joyfully. Because as we live our daily lives and try to be nice to people and understand them and help them and go out of our way to make life better for others, we do it with the joy of knowing that we are trying to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ.

So let us pray today for the grace to be faithful servants of Jesus Christ our King. Nothing in our lives, my brothers and sisters, should be more important than Jesus Christ!

Think about it this week: Nothing in our lives should be more important than Jesus Christ!

And let us ask Our Blessed Mother Mary — Our Lady of the Angels and the Queen of Heaven — that through her intercession may we all gain the grace we need to allow Jesus Christ to rule in our hearts and souls as we serve others for the love of him and seek to build his Kingdom of Love.

ⁱ Readings: Ezek. 34:11–12, 15–17; Ps. 23:1–6; 1 Cor. 15:20–26, 28; Matt. 25:31–46.

ⁱⁱ Col. 1:15–17; Heb. 1:3.

ⁱⁱⁱ Matt. 20:28.